

MOAB MASTER LEASING PLAN AND PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENTS/FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE MOAB AND MONTICELLO FIELD OFFICES

Lead Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Type of Action: Final

Jurisdiction: Grand and San Juan Counties, Utah

Abstract: This Moab Master Leasing Plan and Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments/Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Moab and Monticello Field Offices (MLP/FEIS) has been prepared by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Canyon Country District. This document addresses the need for additional planning and analyses for considering new leasing of oil and gas and potash on about 785,000 acres of public lands within the Planning Area. The proposed mineral leasing decisions would amend the 2008 Moab and Monticello Resource Management Plans (RMP) within the Planning Area.

The Planning Area covers about 785,000 acres in southeast Utah, encompassing west-central Grand County south of Interstate 70 as well as a portion of northern San Juan County. The western boundary is the Green River and the northeastern edge of Canyonlands National Park. To the south of Moab, the Planning Area includes lands between Canyonlands National Park and U.S. Highway 191. The Planning Area encompasses a mix of land uses including a variety of recreation uses, potash production, oil and gas development, and livestock grazing.

The MLP process provides additional planning and analyses prior to new leasing of oil and gas and potash within the Planning Area. The outcome of the MLP process could result in identifying new leasing stipulations, establishing best management practices, and specifying development constraints. Changes to the leasing stipulations would require amendments to the RMPs. The major issues addressed in the MLP process are 1) high quality visual resources, 2) high use recreation areas, and 3) proximity to National Parks.

Four management alternatives for the MLP/FEIS have been developed for consideration and analysis. Alternative A is a continuation of current management (No Action Alternative); oil, gas, and potash leasing and development could occur at the same time on the same tracts of land. Alternative B minimizes impacts to sensitive resources and recreational use by limiting oil and gas and potash leasing. Mineral leasing decisions are separated into Alternative B1 and Alternative B2. Alternative B1 minimizes impacts to sensitive resources by separating oil and gas leasing and development from potash leasing and development. Alternative B2 minimizes impacts to sensitive resources by only considering oil and gas leasing; no new potash leasing would occur. Alternative C emphasizes protection of sensitive resources and recreational uses over oil and gas leasing and development; no new potash leasing would occur. Alternative D is the BLM's Proposed Plan and minimizes surface disturbance by separating oil and gas development from potash development while maximizing protection for BLM lands adjoining Arches and Canyonlands National Parks.

Comments received on the MLP/Draft RMP Amendments/Draft EIS (MLP/DEIS) from the public and internal BLM review were considered and incorporated as appropriate into the MLP/FEIS. Public comments resulted in the addition of clarifying text, but did not significantly change proposed land use plan decisions. Adjustments and clarifications have been made to the preferred alternative in the MLP/DEIS which is now presented as the proposed plan in the MLP/FEIS.

A 30-day protest period will begin with the publication of the Environmental Protection Agency Notice of Availability for the MLP/FEIS in the *Federal Register*. For detailed information on filing a protest refer to the MLP website at <http://www.blm.gov/21jd>.